

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8693
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, TW

SUBJECT: LOCAL PRESS COMMENTARY ON PRESIDENT FORD'S STATE-
MENT ON DETENTE

1. ALL MARCH 3 LOCAL NEWSPAPERS CARRIED A UPI DISPATCH REPORTING A STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT FORD DURING A TELEVISION INTERVIEW THAT THE WORD "DETENTE" NO LONGER APPLIES TO U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE USSR AND THE PRC BUT THAT HE WILL CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SUPERPOWERS IN A POLICY OF "PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH." THE LOCAL PRESS ALSO CARRIED A UPI DISPATCH REPORTING THAT STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS WERE TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENT.

2. MOST EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARY ON PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENT INTERPRETED IT TO SIGNAL A WELCOME CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY. AN EDITORIAL IN THE SEMI-OFFICIAL CHUNG YANG JIH PAO CHARACTERIZED THE STATEMENT AS THE MOST CLEAR-CUT STATEMENT MADE BY A U.S. AUTHORITY SINCE 1969 TOWARD U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE USSR AND PRC. IT ADDED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION NOT TO USE THE WORD "DETENTE" INDICATED HIS DETERMINATION TO GRASP THE KEY TO THE WORLD SITUATION.

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3. ONE LOCAL ANALYST, HOWEVER, TOOK THE VIEW THAT THE PRESIDENT'S REMARK DID NOT MEAN THE ADMINISTRATION WILL ABANDON THE DETENTE POLICY BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT LACKS DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCE, THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IS A MINORITY PARTY, THE FEAR OF NUCLEAR WAR STILL EXISTS, AND THE ADMINISTRATION CANNOT COMPLETELY ELIMINATE THE BALANCE OF POWER THEORY DESIGNED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER.

4. IN ANALYZING THE REASONS BEHIND THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT, MOST COMMENTATORS AGREED THAT THE PRESIDENT MADE HIS STATEMENT BECAUSE OF CAMPAIGN PRESSURES RESULTING FROM OPPOSITION TO DETENTE BY CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICANS AND THE PUBLIC AS A WHOLE AS WELL AS BECAUSE OF THE "FAILURE OF DETENTE."

5. COMMENT: MOST LOCAL POLITICAL OBSERVERS VIEW THE CONCEPT OF DETENTE AS THE GENESIS OF THE U.S. EFFORT TO SEEK NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE PRC. IT IS THEREFORE NOT SURPRISING THAT THE PRESS HAS CHOSEN TO INTERPRET THE PRESIDENT'S REMARK AS A SIGN OF A U.S. POLICY SHIFT AWAY FROM A CONCEPT WHICH IS DISTASTEFUL TO MOST PEOPLE HERE AND HAS BEEN VIEWED AS A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE ROC.
UNGER

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